**ARTICLES**

**1. THE INDEFINITE ARTICLE: (A/AN)**

The indefinite articles are ***a*** and ***an***. The form *a* is used before a word beginning with a consonant or a vowel with a consonant sound.

e.g. a man, a hat, a one way street, a useful thing.

The form *an* is used before words beginning with a vowel or words

beginning with a mute “h”.

e.g. an apple, an hour, an honorable man, an SOS

**1.1. Use of the indefinite article a/an:**

A/ An is used before:

A. A singular noun which is countable when it is mentioned for the first time and represents no particular person or thing.

e.g. A house has a roof.

They live in a flat.

B. A singular countable noun which represents a class of things. e.g. A cow has horns. → All cows have horns.

A child needs love. → All children need love.

C. A noun complement (subject complement) including names of professions.

e.g. It was an earthquake. She’ll be a dancer.

D. Certain expressions of quantity.

e.g. a lot of , a couple of

a dozen (one dozen is also possible).

E. Certain numbers

e.g. a hundred, a thousand, a million

F. Half, when half follows a whole number. e.g. 3 ½ Kg: three and a half kilos.

G. In expressions of price, speed etc. e.g. Five dinars a kilo.

Sixty kilometers an hour.

H. *Few* and *little*.

A few: a small number

e.g. A few friends came to see him.

A little : a small amount

e.g. A little time was given to examinees.

*Few* and *little* can also be used without the indefinite article.

e.g. We had little time to see each other. → implies that we were always busy.

Few people know this. → It is almost unknown.

I. Singular countable nouns in exclamations.

e.g. What a mess !

What a pretty girl !

J. Mr./Mrs./Miss + surname

e.g. A Mr. Smith/ a Mrs. Smith /a Miss Smith is looking for you.

It means a man called Mr. Smith and implies that he is a stranger to the speaker.

Mr. Smith without *a* implies that the speaker knows Mr. Smith or knows of his existence.

**1.2. Omission of the indefinite article a/an:** A/An is omitted:

A. Before plural nouns. The indefinite article a/an has no plural form. e.g. A dog → dogs

An egg → eggs

B. Before uncountable nouns (see lesson of nouns).

C. Before abstract nouns: beauty, happiness, fear, hope, death, etc…except

when they are used in a particular sense.

e.g. He was pale with *fear*.

Some children suffer from *a fear* of the dark.

D. Before names of meals unless preceded by an adjective.

e.g. We have breakfast at eight.

She gave us a good breakfast.

The article is also used when it is a special meal given to celebrate something.

e.g. I was invited to a dinner given to welcome the new ambassador.

**2. THE DEFINITE ARTICLE (THE):**

The definite article is *the,* used for singular and plural nouns and for

all genders.

e.g. The boy/ the boys, the girl/ the girls, the door/ the doors

**2.1. Use of the definite article:**

The definite article is used:

A. When the object or group of objects is unique or considered to be unique

e.g. The earth, the sky, the equator, the stars.

B. Before a noun which has become definite as a result of being mentioned a second time

e.g. His car struck a tree; you can still see the mark on the tree.

C. Before a noun made definite by the addition of a phrase or clause

e.g. The boy that I met.

The girl in blue.

The place where I met him.

D. Before a noun which by reason of locality, can represent only one particular thing

e.g. She is in the garden. (The garden of this house).

He sent for the doctor (his own doctor).

E. Before superlatives, only, and first, second, third etc. when used as adjectives or pronouns

e.g. Mont Blanc is the highest mountain in Europe.

The first week of a holiday is always pleasant.

F. Before an adjective used to represent a class of persons

e.g. There is no peace for any but *the dead*.

*The old* and *the young* should be able to live together.

G. Before certain proper names of seas, rivers, groups of islands, chains of mountains, deserts and plural names of countries

e.g. the Atlantic, the Thames, the Alps, the USA, the USSR

*The Sudan* and *the Mali* are the only names of countries which take the definite article.

H. Before proper names consisting of ‘*adjective + noun’* or ‘*noun + of + noun’*

e.g. The National Gallery

The Tower of London.

I. With names of people, ‘*the + Plural surname’* can be used to mean *‘the …….. family’*

e.g. We invited the Simpsons. → We invited the Simpson family.

J. Before musical instruments used with the verb *play*.

e.g. She learnt to play the flute.

**2.2. Omission of the definite article:**

The definite article is not used:

A. Before names of places and people except as shown before.

e.g. Amina is my friend.

We travel to Spain.

B. Before abstract nouns except when they are used in a particular sense, compare:

e.g. Men fear death.

The death of the prime minister left his party without a leader.

C. Before names of games e.g. He plays golf.

D. Before *home* when it is not preceded or flowed by a descriptive word or phrase.

e.g. He went home.

We arrived at the bride’s home.

E. Before *bed, church, court, hospital, prison, school, college, and university* when these places are visited or used for their primary purpose.

e.g. I go to bed to sleep.

He was kept in prison for the crimes he committed.

But when these places are visited or used for other reasons, the definite article *the* is used.

e.g. I put my dress on the bed.

He goes to the prison sometimes, to give lectures.

F. Before *sea* when we go to sea as sailors.

Also to be at sea = to be on a voyage (as passengers or crew).

But we say *to go* or *to be at the sea* meaning *to go* or *to be at the seaside*.

We can also live by/near the sea.

G. Before *work* when it means place of work. e.g. He is on his way to work.

H. Before *town* when speaking about the subject’s or speaker’s own town that is the city center.

e.g. We were in town yesterday.